



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June 12, 2008

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Carol Wolenberg, Deputy Superintendent *CW*

SUBJECT: Direct Certification of Children in Food Stamp Households for Free School Meals

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265), amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require direct certification. Each local educational agency (LEA) must directly certify children who are members of households receiving assistance under the Food Stamp Program as eligible for free school meals, without further application, based on information provided in an electronic data file from the Department of Human Services (DHS). The direct certification requirement went into effect School Year (SY) 2007-08 for all school districts with an enrollment of 10,000 students or more in the preceding year. In SY 2008-09, the direct certification requirement applies to all LEAs that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

The United States Department of Agriculture provided grant funds to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop a new process to ensure that all LEAs in Michigan can comply with this requirement. In August 2007, a Direct Certification Report through the Single Record Student Database/Unique Identification Code Application (SRSD/UIC Application) was available for all public school districts. For SY 2008-09, all school districts, including nonpublic schools, will be provided access to the report.

This Direct Certification Report replaces the data file of children of food stamp recipients who reside in zip code areas (provided by the DHS) that the MDE has previously mailed to local districts every summer. The new report matches data from DHS with student enrollment data reported by school districts in the SRSD. Matched students will be automatically certified as eligible for free school meals. Each LEA must then notify these households that the children, as directly certified, are eligible for free

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN N. STRAUS – PRESIDENT • JOHN C. AUSTIN – VICE PRESIDENT
CAROLYN L. CURTIN – SECRETARY • MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – TREASURER
NANCY DANHOF – NASBE DELEGATE • ELIZABETH W. BAUER
REGINALD M. TURNER • CASANDRA E. ULBRICH

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

Page 2
June 12, 2008

benefits, no further application is necessary, and the household must notify the school if they do not want free school meal benefits for their children. For more information, please refer to the *Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual* at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/default.htm>.

The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) has provided additional materials on the process, as well as training materials for schools on how to access the Direct Certification Report. These materials are available at http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,1607,7-113-986_46967---,00.html.

Questions regarding the content of this letter may be directed to CEPI Customer Support by e-mail to cepi@michigan.gov or phone 517-335-0505 and select option "3."

cc: Public School Academy Authorizers